

SUMMER CAMP

GUIDE



Finding the Perfect Camp

Selecting a summer camp is one of the most exciting decisions a parent can make for their child, but with so many options, it can also feel overwhelming.

Finding the right fit can lead to new skills, lifelong friendships and unforgettable memories. Here's how to ensure your child's summer is one to remember.

UNDERSTAND YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

The key to choosing the perfect camp starts with your child. Each camper is unique, and their personality and interests should help guide your decision.

Talk with your child to learn what they're excited about. Do they love team sports, experimenting in a lab, or exploring the great outdoors?

Camps can focus on anything from soccer to science to hiking, so understanding their preferences is essential.

For some children, a highly structured environment with planned activities is ideal. Others might prefer the freedom of unstructured time to explore and play.

Knowing how your child thrives will narrow the choices.



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RESEARCH CAMP CREDENTIALS

Safety, quality and staff experience are crucial when selecting a camp. Look for ones accredited by the American Camp Association or similar organizations, as this signals adherence to high standards in safety, staff training and programming.

Inquire about the camp's policies, such as medical care and emergency procedures. Ask if counselors are trained

in first aid and CPR, and check the ratio of staff to campers. Camps should welcome your questions and offer clear, reassuring answers.

If possible, visit the camp or attend an open house. Seeing the facilities and meeting the staff can help you feel confident about your choice.

BALANCE FUN WITH PRACTICALITY

While your child's interests are a priority, practical con-

siderations also play a role.

Location matters, especially for day camps where daily travel is required. Overnight camps further afield may offer unique experiences but require additional planning for transportation.

Cost is another important factor. While camps can vary significantly in price, many offer scholarships or sliding scales. Be upfront about your budget and ask about any financial assistance programs.

Finally, think about the camp's duration. Short, week-long programs can be great for first-time campers, while older or more experienced kids might enjoy multi-week or full-summer sessions.

By balancing your child's needs with practical details, you'll find a camp that feels like a perfect match for your family. The right choice can set the stage for an unforgettable summer of adventure, growth and joy.

Types Of Camps To Explore

Summer camps come in all shapes and sizes, offering something for every child.

Whether your child loves sports, arts or outdoor adventures, there's a camp tailored to their interests and personality. Here's a look at the different types of camps to help you decide which one fits your family best.

DAY CAMPS

Day camps are perfect for younger children or those not quite ready for an overnight stay. These camps operate during the day, allowing kids to return home each evening to the comfort of their family.

Often located in community centers, parks or local schools, day camps feature a wide variety of activities, from arts and crafts to team sports and nature exploration. For working parents, many day camps offer extended hours, making them a convenient choice.

Day camps also provide a great introduction to the camp experience, helping kids build confidence and independence without being far from home.

OVERNIGHT CAMPS

Overnight camps offer an immersive experience where kids stay at camp for a week or longer. These camps are ideal for older children or those looking to deepen friendships and develop



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independence.

Traditional overnight camps typically combine outdoor activities like hiking, canoeing and campfires with creative outlets like drama or music. Living in cabins or tents fosters teamwork and resilience while creating a sense of community.

For kids with specific passions, specialized overnight camps are an exciting option. They can focus on anything

from soccer or horseback riding to coding or filmmaking, providing a chance to hone skills and meet like-minded peers.

SPECIALTY CAMPS

Specialty camps cater to children with unique interests, offering programs that focus exclusively on a specific activity or theme. These camps range widely, covering everything from robotics and

space exploration to culinary arts and dance.

Sports camps are a popular choice, helping young athletes improve their skills in basketball, swimming or gymnastics. Academic camps give students a chance to dive into STEM, creative writing or language learning while still enjoying the social aspect of camp life.

Some specialty camps also cater to kids with specific needs, such as camps for

children with disabilities or health conditions. These programs provide a supportive environment where kids can thrive alongside peers who share similar experiences.

With so many options, finding the right camp comes down to knowing your child's interests and goals. Whether they want to master a skill, explore the outdoors or simply make new friends, there's a camp designed just for them.

Memories That Last A Lifetime

The laughter of a campfire singalong, the thrill of mastering a new skill and the bonds formed with fellow campers.

These moments define summer camp and leave lasting impressions.

Camps are more than a fun way to spend the summer; they're an opportunity for kids to create memories they'll carry with them forever.

EMBRACING ADVENTURE

Summer camp is packed with activities that push kids out of their comfort zones, fostering a sense of accomplishment and joy.

Whether it's paddling a canoe for the first time, scaling a climbing wall or performing in a talent show, camp gives children the chance to try new things and discover hidden strengths.

These adventurous moments often become cherished memories because they're linked to feelings of pride and excitement. The first time a child hits a bulls-eye in archery or catches a fish on a lake becomes a story they'll tell for years.

Camps also encourage kids to explore the great outdoors. For many, it's a rare chance to disconnect from technology and immerse themselves in nature, finding wonder in starry skies, rustling leaves and rippling streams.



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BUILDING TRADITIONS

Part of what makes camp so memorable is the sense of tradition that many programs embrace. From silly songs and group cheers to themed dress-up days and campfire rituals, these traditions create a sense of belonging and identity.

Participating in these time-honored customs connects campers not only to their peers but to the generations who came before them. Whether it's earning a badge,

signing a shared camp banner or taking part in a farewell ceremony, these traditions become treasured pieces of a camper's story.

These rituals often stick with campers long after they've left. Years later, adults may find themselves humming a favorite camp tune or sharing nostalgic memories of their camp days with friends.

CAPTURING FRIENDSHIPS

The friendships formed at

camp are often among the most memorable aspects of the experience. Unlike school, where social circles are often influenced by academics or activities, camp friendships are forged through shared experiences, laughter and teamwork.

Living and playing together builds deep connections that are hard to replicate elsewhere. From inside jokes to heartfelt conversations, these bonds become an integral part of the camp experience.

Many campers stay in touch

long after summer ends, and the friendships can grow into lifelong relationships. Camp friends often hold a special place in our lives because they remind us of the joy and growth we experienced.

Summer camp is more than just a collection of activities. It's a chance for kids to build a tapestry of memories woven with adventure, tradition and friendship. These moments stay with them, shaping their perspectives and enriching their lives for years to come.

Finding the Right Footwear

From hiking trails to basketball courts, summer camp is full of activities that keep kids on their feet.

The right footwear can make all the difference between a day of adventure and one cut short by discomfort or injury.

Here's what parents need to know to ensure their child is prepared to step confidently into camp.

CHOOSE SHOES FOR EVERY ACTIVITY

Camp activities are as diverse as the kids who attend, and no single pair of shoes can handle them all. Packing the right footwear for specific activities is essential for comfort and safety.

For general use, a sturdy pair of sneakers is a must. Look for shoes with durable soles, breathable material and a secure fit. These will cover everything from running games to casual walks around camp.

If the camp involves hiking, invest in proper hiking boots or trail shoes. These provide ankle support and slip-resistant soles, reducing the risk of injuries on uneven terrain. Make sure they're waterproof if the camp will involve crossing streams or rainy weather.

Water shoes are another important addition for camps near lakes, rivers or pools. They protect feet from sharp rocks, slippery surfaces and



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hot sand, ensuring kids stay safe while enjoying water-based fun.

ENSURE PROPER FIT

Ill-fitting shoes can cause a host of problems, from blisters to sprains. Before sending your child off to camp, take the time to ensure their shoes fit well.

Measure both feet, as one foot may be slightly larger than the other. Shoes should have about a half-inch of space at the toes and fit snugly around the heel without pinching.

Campers will be on their feet for hours, so prioritize

comfort. Shoes with cushioned insoles and good arch support can prevent fatigue and keep kids feeling energized throughout the day.

Breaking in new shoes is also essential. Have your child wear them around the house or on short outings to avoid discomfort or blisters during camp activities.

PACK EXTRAS AND ACCESSORIES

Footwear needs can change depending on the day's activities, so it's smart to pack extras. A second pair of sneakers can be a lifesaver if the first gets wet or muddy.

Socks play a big role in keeping feet comfortable and healthy. Opt for moisture-wicking materials to prevent blisters and keep feet dry. Cotton socks tend to hold moisture, so consider alternatives like merino wool or synthetic blends.

For wet conditions, pack a pair of sandals with straps or flip-flops for shower use. These are especially useful in communal facilities, helping to maintain hygiene and protect feet from slipping.

MAKE FOOT CARE A PRIORITY

Teaching kids basic foot

care ensures they stay comfortable throughout camp. Show them how to clean and dry their feet properly and encourage them to change socks regularly.

If blisters or discomfort arise, make sure they know to speak up and seek help from a counselor or camp nurse. A small pack of blister pads or bandages can also come in handy.

With the right footwear and a little preparation, kids can fully enjoy their summer camp adventures, staying comfortable and confident from the first step to the last one.

A Great Way To Make Friends

Summer camp is about more than activities and adventures; it's a unique environment where friendships blossom.

For many children, camp provides their first opportunity to connect with peers outside of school, creating bonds that can last a lifetime. Here's why summer camp is the perfect setting for making friends.

A FRESH START

One of the best things about camp is the opportunity for kids to meet people they wouldn't encounter in their everyday lives. Campers often come from different schools, towns and even cultures, making camp a melting pot of perspectives.

This fresh start allows kids to form new friendships without the expectations or dynamics they might experience in other social settings. They can be themselves, free from preconceived notions, and discover shared interests with others.

Group activities like team sports, scavenger hunts and campfire storytelling encourage collaboration and help kids build connections in a natural, low-pressure way.

SHARED EXPERIENCES

At camp, kids bond over shared experiences, whether



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it's conquering a ropes course, paddling a canoe or creating a skit for talent night. These moments create a sense of teamwork and camaraderie that strengthens relationships.

Living together in close quarters also fosters connection. Whether it's sharing laughs in the cabin, helping a friend with their backpack or cheering each other on during

activities, campers quickly learn to rely on and support one another.

Even challenges, like adjusting to being away from home, can bring kids closer. Facing new situations together often leads to stronger, more meaningful friendships.

LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

The friendships formed at

camp often extend far beyond the summer.

With today's technology, kids can stay in touch through social media, texting or video calls, keeping their camp connections alive.

Many adults look back on their camp days as a time when they formed some of their closest and most enduring friendships. The unique

environment of camp — a mix of adventure, creativity and shared goals — creates bonds that withstand the test of time.

Summer camp offers more than just fun and games. It provides children with a safe, supportive space to develop social skills, embrace teamwork and form friendships that can shape their lives for years to come.

Medical Readiness For Camp

Summer camp is a time for adventure and fun, but preparing for camp also means ensuring your child is medically ready.

Many camps require health forms or physical exams to ensure every camper can participate safely. Taking a few proactive steps can help parents feel confident their child is ready for a healthy and active summer.

SCHEDULE A CAMP PHYSICAL

Most camps request a recent medical physical as part of their registration process. These checkups help ensure children are in good health and can safely participate in camp activities.

Schedule your child's physical well in advance, as summer is a busy season for doctors. During the exam, your pediatrician will review your child's medical history, update vaccinations and address any health concerns.

Discuss the camp's specific activities with your doctor, such as swimming, hiking or high-intensity sports, so they can provide tailored advice.

If your child has any conditions that may require accommodations — like asthma, allergies or diabetes — this is the perfect time to develop a plan.



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PREPARE MEDICATIONS AND ALLERGIES

If your child takes medications, ensure you understand the camp's policies for administering them. Most camps require medications to be in their original packaging, labeled clearly with instructions.

Provide the camp with a detailed list of medications, dosages and times, and discuss any additional care your child might need.

Many camps have trained medical staff to assist, but it's essential to communicate openly about your child's

requirements.

For kids with allergies, provide a list of triggers and treatment protocols, including EpiPens or antihistamines if needed.

Ask about the camp's food safety practices and whether they can accommodate dietary restrictions.

PACK A COMPREHENSIVE FIRST-AID KIT

While camps are equipped with first-aid supplies, sending your child with a small, personalized kit can be helpful. Include basics like bandages, antiseptic wipes

and pain relievers, along with any specific items your child might need, like blister pads or motion sickness medication.

Teach your child how to use the items in their kit and encourage them to seek help from a counselor or medical staff if they're unsure. This fosters both independence and responsibility.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Talk to your child about their health needs before camp starts. Teach them to recognize the signs of common issues like dehydration

or allergic reactions and encourage them to speak up if they're not feeling well.

Ensure the camp staff knows how to reach you in case of an emergency. Most camps provide forms for listing emergency contacts, so double-check that your information is up to date.

By preparing medically for camp, you're giving your child the tools they need to stay safe, healthy and ready to enjoy every moment of their summer adventure. With a little extra planning, parents can relax knowing their camper is in good hands.

Packing Light And Staying Cool

Packing for summer camp is all about balance. Kids need to be prepared for a variety of activities and weather conditions, but overpacking can lead to bulky bags and unnecessary stress.

By focusing on essentials and lightweight gear, parents can help campers stay comfortable and ready to beat the summer heat.

PACK SMART, PACK LIGHT

The key to packing light is sticking to the essentials. Camps often provide a packing list tailored to their programs, so use it as a guide and avoid adding extras.

Start with versatile clothing that can be layered. Lightweight, moisture-wicking shirts and shorts are perfect for hot days, while a long-sleeve shirt or fleece can provide warmth on cooler evenings. Convertible pants that zip off into shorts are another great option, combining two items into one.

When it comes to footwear, limit packing to two or three pairs: sturdy sneakers or hiking boots for activities, water shoes for aquatic adventures and flip-flops for shower use.

A lightweight backpack is essential for daily use, letting campers carry water bottles,



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sunscreen and other necessities without strain. Choose one with adjustable straps and plenty of compartments for easy organization.

STAY COOL IN THE HEAT

Summer camp often means spending long hours in the sun, so preparing for the heat is critical. Proper clothing and accessories can make all the difference.

Breathable fabrics like cotton blends or performance materials keep kids cool by

wicking away sweat. Look for clothing labeled as UV-protective for added defense against the sun's rays. A wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses are must-haves to protect faces and eyes.

Hydration is another top priority. Pack a reusable water bottle or hydration pack that's easy for kids to carry and refill. Encourage frequent sips throughout the day to avoid dehydration.

Sunscreen is non-negotiable. Choose a broad-spectrum

SPF 30 or higher and pack enough for regular reapplication. Teach your child how to apply it correctly, focusing on often-missed spots like ears and the back of the neck.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Packing light doesn't mean skipping comfort. Streamline toiletries by using travel-sized bottles and packing multipurpose items, like a combined shampoo and body wash.

Roll clothing instead of folding to save space in the bag

and keep items wrinkle-free. Packing cubes or zippered pouches are also great for keeping gear organized.

By focusing on lightweight, multipurpose gear and essentials for summer weather, parents can ensure their kids are prepared for camp without overpacking.

This approach not only makes life easier for campers but also sets the stage for a comfortable, stress-free summer full of fun and exploration.